मृगतृष्णा-एक दोपहर की बेचैनी

mrig-trishNaa-ek dopahar kee bechainee

Unquenched

AN AFTERNOON'S YEARNING

VIJAY FAFAT

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WALKING STICK PUBLICATION

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प्यासी आँखें पूछ रहीं थी पैमाने से
"कैसे बुझेगी इस मृगजल से तृष्णा?"

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Devnagari Pronunciation Key

The Appendix has a short primer on the Devnagari script. Below is the key to reading this book in transliterated form in case the reader is unfamiliar with it. While there are many technical transliteration schemes available, we have chosen to devise the one below to follow intuitive phonetic representation based on the English alphabet, which suffices for our purpose.

Symbol	**Devnagari**	**Pronunciation**
a	अ	Starting sound in "against"
aa	आ	Starting sound in "after"
ai	ऐ	Starting sound of "air"
au	ऑ	Starting sound in "awful"
b	ब	Starting sound of "burn"
bau	बौ	Combination of 2 sounds: "b" and "au"
bh	भ	Combination of 2 sounds: "b" and "h"
br	ब्र	Combination of 2 sounds: "b" and "r"
ch	च	Starting sound in "chatter"
chai	चै	Combination of 2 sounds: "ch" and "ai"
chau	चौ	Combination of 2 sounds: "ch" and "au"
Chh, Chha	छ	Combination of 2 sounds: "ch" and "h"
Chhaa	छा	Combination of 2 sounds: "Chh" and "aa"
d	द	Same as the British pronunciation of English word, "the"
D	ड	Starting sound in "dog"
dh	ध	Combination of 2 sounds: "d" and "h"
Dh	ढ	Combination of 2 sounds: "D" and "h"
dhau	धौ	Combination of 2 sounds: "dh" and "au"
dhe	धे	Combination of 2 sounds: "dh" and "e"
Dhe	ढे	Combination of 2 sounds: "Dh" and "e"
e	ए	Last sound in "lay". If in doubt, think of "e" replaced by "A", the first sound while reciting A B C D…
-e-	ए	Last sound in "lay", appears in conjoining 2 words - e.g. "ummeed-e-nazar"
ee	ई	Starting sound in "keep"
f, fa	फ	Starting sound of "first"

g	ग	Starting sound in "gutter"
ge	गे	Same as the pronunciation of "gay"
gh	घ	Combination of 2 sounds: "g" and "h"
h, ha	ह	Starting sound in "hunger". Remember that "ha" is NOT "haa" as in "haha". It is the starting sound in "hunger"
hai	है	Combination of 2 sounds: "h" and "ai". This is a very common word in Hindi and means some form of "is", "exists", "is around", and the like
hee	ही	Combination of 2 sounds: "h" and "ee"
i	इ	Clipped "ee" sound, as in "lit"
j	ज	Starting sound of "jug"
jh, jha	झ	Combination of 2 sounds: "j" and "h"
jhee	झी	Combination of 2 sounds: "j" and "hee"
jho	झो	Combination of 2 sounds: "j" and "ho"
k	क	Starting sound of "cut"
kai	कै	Combination of 2 sounds: "k" and "ai"
kh, kha	ख	Combination of 2 sounds: "k" and "h". The starting sound in "Khalifa", as in "Burj Khalifa"
khai	खै	Combination of 3 sounds - "k", "h" and "ai"
knee	नी	Combination of 3 sounds: "k" and "n" & "ee"
ksh	क्ष	Combination of 2 sounds: "k" and "sh"
kyo	क्यो	Starting sound in "Kyoto". Combination of 2 sounds: "k" and yo"
kyo.n	क्यों	Combination of 2 sounds: "kyo" and ".n". It means "why?" in Hindi
l, la	ल	Starting sound of "loud"
m	म	Starting sound of "mother"
ma	मा	Starting sound of "march"
mai	मै	Combination of 2 sounds: "m" and "ai". This does not mean "I". It is used in combination with other letters
mai.n	मैं	Combination of 3 sounds: "m", "ai" and ".n". mai.n means "I"
mm	म्म	Combination of 2 "m" sounds, with the first "m" clipped. Imagine pronouncing "humming" but as 2

		separate words, "hum" and "ming". The "m sound which emerges is the "mm" sound
n	न	Starting sound in "no"
.n	-	nasal "n", merging with the prior syllable, as in the “n” sound in “anger”. It appears as a dot or an upward opening semi circle with its center dot. It only appears above some Hindi letter, never stand-alone. e.g. "maa.n" is written as माँ and means "mother". It is a combination of the "maa" sound, at the end of which, the nasal "n" slides in, merging with the "aa" sound
N	ण	This has no English equivalent or combination. It is a strong "n". See comment. Make the "n" sound with the tip of the tongue touching the palate (the roof of the mouth). That is "N"
nn	न	Combination of 2 "n" sounds, with the first "n" clipped
nya, ny	न्य	Combination of 2 sounds: "n" and "ya"
oo	ऊ	Starting sound in "ooze"
p	प	Starting sound of "punch"
pai	पै	Combination of 2 sounds: "p" and "ai"
pe	पे	Combination of 2 sounds: "p" and "-e-"
pya, py	प्य	Combination of 2 sounds: "p" and "ya"
r	र	Starting sound of "run"
rau	रौ	Combination of 2 sounds: "r" and "au"
s	स	Starting sound in "sound"
se	से	Combination of 2 sounds: "s" and "-e-"
sh	श	Starting sound of "shut"
T	ट	Starting sound in "try"
t	त	Starting sound in "Talmud" or the French "tu"
Th	ठ	Combination of 2 sounds: "T" and "h"
th	थ	Starting sound in "three" or "thunder"
u	उ	A clipped "oo" sound
v	व	Starting sound of "viral"
w	व	Starting sound of "well"
ya, y	य	Starting sound in "yearn"
yo	यो	Starting sound of "yoke"
z	ज़	Last sound in "maze"

प्रस्तावना

हर शनीचर–इतवार की दोपहर को दिन सो जाता है पहर आधे पहर के लिए। एक अलग शान्ती रहती है उसके पहलू में। कोई थकान नहीं होती पर एक आलस सा छाया रहता है। बाहर का तेज़ उजाला और कमरे के पंखे की सर्राती हवा – यही अपने खयालों के साथी रहते हैं। हर लम्हा आहिस्ता कदमों से चलता है... रेगिस्तान की सूखी, नर्म रेत पर। समय थमा सा रहता है, जैसे घड़ी के काटों पे किसीने बोझ रख दिया हो।

ऐसे वक्त मीठी नींद ना आए तो मन में ज़रूर कोई चोर है।

या कोई बेचैनी...।

बेचैनी भी एक अजीब सी कहानी है। कुछ कहती नहीं, पर हर पल लगता है खुसपुसा के बोल रही है अंतर्मन से; कह रही है के कोई ज़र्रा है जो अपने ठिकाने पर सही नहीं – कहीं कुछ ग़लत है, कुछ बातों की अनबन। पर क्या अनबन, इसका इल्म नहीं। एक अंजानी कसक महसूस होती है। एक बेनाम सी कचोट दिल की, एक रुख़–रुख़, एक हल्की चुभन...जैसे कोई फ़ैसला रुका हुआ है किसीके इंतज़ार में।

बेचैनी कोई परेशानी नहीं होती – परेशानी हो तो समझ भी आता है के मर्ज़ क्या है। बेचैनी एक उलझन होती है जिसमे किसी एक तरफ इशारा करके कह नहीं सकते की *"ये! ये है मेरी बेचैनी की वजह!"*। वो उलझन जो कहती भी नहीं के उलझन क्या है...।

बेचैनी उस आस के कमंडल का नाम है जिसे ले कर आप मृगजल से प्यास बुझाने की कोशिश में लगे रहते हैं...।

बेचैनी के कई रूप होते हैं – खोए बचपन की याद; वो प्यार जो अतीत के गलियारों में कहीं खो गया; कुछ सही–ग़लत के फ़लसफ़े; बचे हुए कामों की फेहरिस्त; आने वाले कल की कुछ अंजान, अव्यक्त चिंता जिसे अगर लफ़्ज़ों में बयान करो तो बेवकूफी लगे; रोज़मर्रा के जीवन की छोटी सी माँगें; मुंगेरीलाल के हसीन पर असफल सपनों

जैसे सपने...।

बेचैनी की इन्ही कुछ सरगोशीयों को लिख रहा हूँ। शायद इनसे आपका भी पाला पड़ा हो किसी इतवार की दोपहर की उखडी हुई नींद में..।

शब्बखैर!

विजय फाफट
सिंगापूर
जुलाइ 16, 2018

prastaavanaa

har shaneechar-itwaar kee dopahar ko din so jaataa hai pahar aadhe pahar ke liye | ek alag shaantee rehtee hai uske pehloo me.n | koi thakaan nahee.n hotee par ek aalas saa Chhaayaa rehtaa hai | baahar ka tez ujaalaa aur kamre ke pa.nkhe kee sarraatee hawaa - yahee apne khayaalo.n ke saathee rehte hai.n | har lamhaa aahistaa kadmo.n se chaltaa hai... registaan kee sookhee, narm ret par | samay thamaa saa rehtaa hai, jaise ghaDee ke kaaTo.n pe kiseene bojh rakh diyaa ho |

aise wakt meeThee nee.nd na aaye to man me.n zaroor koi chor hai |

ya koi bechainee... |

bechainee bhee ek ajeeb see kahaanee hai | kuChh kehtee nahee.n, par har pal lagtaa hai khuspusaa ke bol rahee hai antarman se; keh rahee hai ke koi zarra hai jo apne Thikaane par sahee nahee.n - kahee.n kuChh galat hai, kuChh baato.n kee anban | par kyaa anban, iskaa ilm nahee.n | ek anjaanee kasak mehsoos hotee hai | ek benaam see kachoT dil kee, ek rukh-rukh, ek halkee chubhan...jaise koi faislaa rukaa hua hai kiseeke intazaar me.n |

bechainee koi pareshaanee nahee.n hotee - pareshaanee ho to samajh bhee aataa hai ke marz kyaa hai | bechainee ek uljhan hotee hai jisme kisee ek taraf ishaaraa karke keh nahee.n sakte kee "*ye! ye hai meree bechainee kee vajah!*" | wo uljhan jo kehtee bhee nahee.n ke uljhan kyaa hai... |

bechainee us aas ke kamanDal kaa naam hai jise le kar aap mrigjal se pyaas bujhaane kee koshish me.n lage rehte hai.n... |

bechainee ke kaee roop hote hai.n - khoye bachpan kee yaad; wo pyaar jo ateet ke galiyaaro.n me.n kahee.n kho gayaa; kuch sahee-galat ke falsafe; bache hue kaamo.n kee fehrist; aane waale kal kee kuch anjaan, avyakt chintaa jise agar lafzo.n me.n bayaan karo to bevkoofee lage; rozmarra

ke jeevan kee ChhoTee see ma.nge.n; mungereelaal ke haseen par asafal sapno.n jaise sapne... |

bechainee kee inhee kuChh sargoshiyo.n ko likh rahaa hoo.n | shaayad inse aapkaa bhee paalaa paDaa ho kisee itwaar kee dopahar kee ukhDee huee nee.nd me.n... |

shabba-khair!

Vijay Fafat
Singapore
July 20, 2018

Foreword
(translated)

Every Saturday-Sunday afternoon the day catches a nap for an hour or two. A sheen of serenity pervades in its lethargy. The indolence is not born of a tired body, for sure, but lassitude reigns nonetheless. The intense sunshine outside and the cool breeze of the squeaking fan in the room are the only companions of this pleasant torpor and its thoughts. Every moment walks light on its footsteps, as if treading the soft, dry sand of the desert dunes. The flow of time seems arrested, the leadened hands of the wall clock moving with protest.

On such afternoons, if such languor does not lull the mind to a light sleep, it must be harboring some residul guilt ...

Or it must be afflicted by an unknown, heated uneasiness....

This unease afflicting you is a strange beast. It does not speak, but there is an inescapable feeling that it is incessantly whispering its misgivings to the subconscious; that something somewhere is not in its right place, is a tad askew; that there is an elementary disagreement of sorts built into the nature around you. There is no hint of exactly what this disagreement may be between man and his environment, but you know it exists somehow, somewhere... it is an unnamed yearning which keeps you restless, a stutter in the heart which does not relent; a disquiet, a mental disturbance which besets you; a decision which is hanging in balance on some lazy jury's capricious pleasure...

The source of this uneasiness is not any overt problem or difficulty you may have encountered in your daily life. With a crystallized problem, one usually knows the issues involved, the obstacles which are to be surmounted, even if the solutions to them are out of reach. No, the simmering malaise is different. It is an affliction which does not let you point to anything specific and say, "*This! This is what afflicts me.*" It is an insistent riddle which does not even announce what the riddle is

about. This disturbance of the conscience is the vessel you have been subconsciously carrying while racing after a mirage, trying to fill it to brim with its silvery but unobtainable waters...

The vessel, and the waters it chases, arise in many forms - a lost memory of childhood; an unrequited love of youth past; some philosophical matters of principle; an amorphous credo to decide matters of right and wrong; a checklist of unfinished tasks or business; unspoken uncertainties of the coming tomorrow, which, if articulated, would ring foolish to the ears; the small desires and demands of daily life; the pleasant conquests of Don Quixote which remain but unfulfilled dreams...

The whisperings of such restlessness are what have been scribbled in the pages here. Perhaps some of these have also whispered to you in a disturbed sleep on a lazy Sunday afternoon...

Wishing you good tidings at eventide!

Vijay Fafat
Singapore
July 20, 2018

मृगतृष्णा-एक दोपहर की बेचैनी

mrig-trishNaa-*ek dopahar kee bechainee*

Unquenched

AN AFTERNOON'S YEARNING

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chit-paT

ye shatranj ke andhe chaukonraat aur din ke adne mohre
sheh denewaale dete rahe pyaado.n ke dil se
maat to har wazeer kee hee hai
is tilism kee chaukhaT par

Check-Mate

These blind squares of a chessboard,
minor pieces of night and light;
on these do the craven attack incessantly...
No matter, they are of no consequence.
On the doorsteps of this world of sorcery,
only those with the Queen's power win.

chit-paT = चित–पट = check-mate

shatranj = शतरंज = chess

mohraa = मोहरा = pawn

sheh = शह = in chess, the act of giving a "check"; in general, a feint; a mild threat or push to do something

tilism = तिलिस्म = a web of magic and illusion

chaukhaT = चौखट = entrance door-frame of a house

चित्त-पट

ये शतरंज के अंधे चौकोन
रात और दिन के अदने मोहरे
शह देनेवाले देते रहे प्यादों के दिल से
मात तो हर वज़ीर की ही है
इस तिलिस्म की चौखट पर

chaTTe-baTTe

roTee, rozee, paseenaa, gam
sab ek nivaale ke hamsaathee

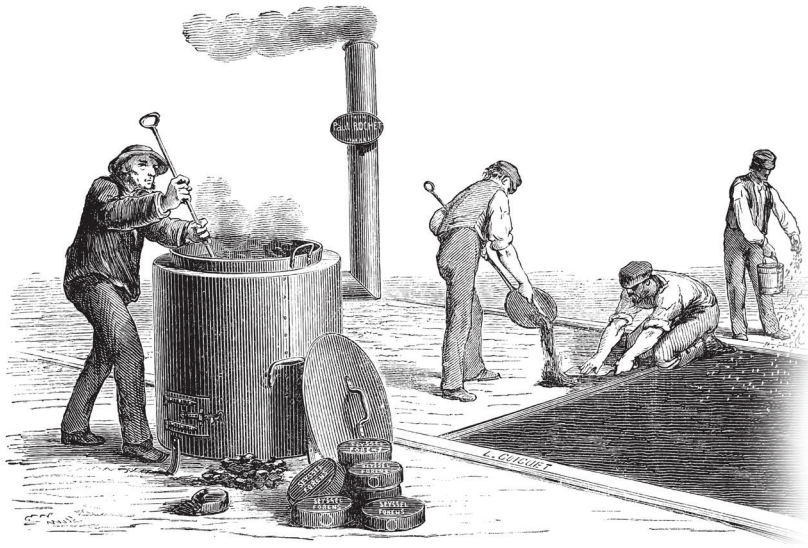
Thieves Of A Den

Food, Work, Sweat, Grief.
Companions in the same lump of hunger.

chaTTe-baTTe = चट्टे–बट्टे = companions; peas in a pod
nivaalaa = निवाला = a morsel of food

चट्टे-बट्टे

रोटी, रोज़ी, पसीना, ग़म
सब एक निवाले के हमसाथी

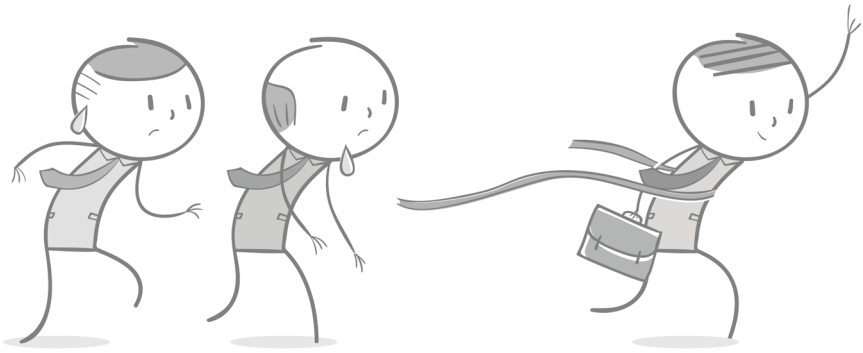


jaayaz sawaal

ye kis dauD me.n lage ho jhooThaa naam kamaane kee
jaise naajaayaz santaan ho is zamaane kee?

Ancestry

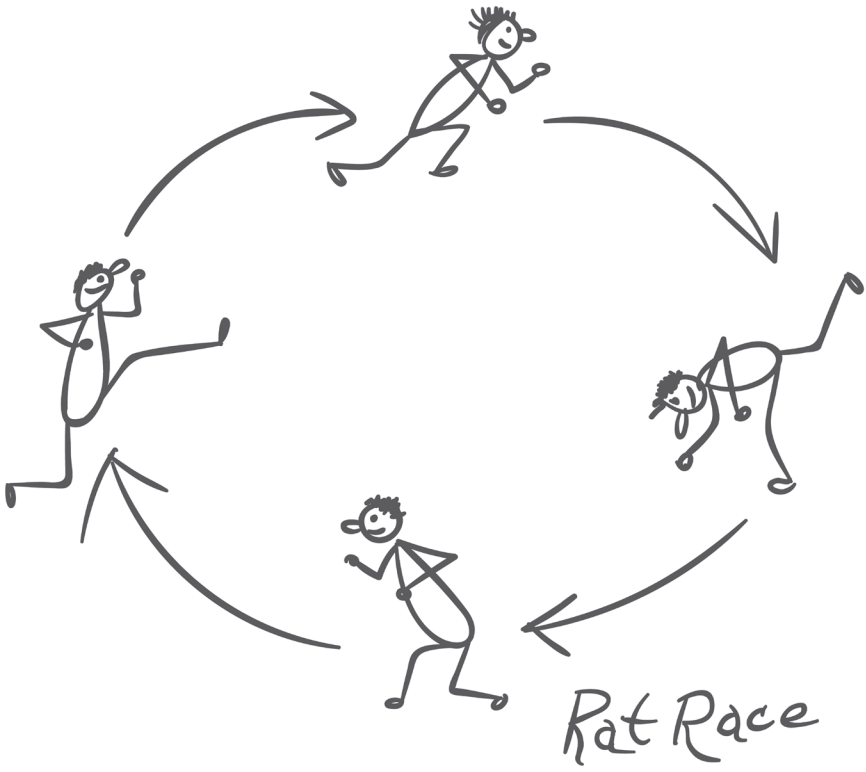
Is it for name you strive,
like an illegitimate off-spring?



jaayaz = जायज़ = valid; reasonable
naajaayaz = नाजायज़ = illegitimate
santaan = संतान = son or daughter

जायज़ सवाल

ये किस दौड़ में लगे हो झूठा नाम कमाने की
जैसे नाजायज़ संतान हो इस ज़माने की?



kambakht

ye kaun kachoT rahaa hai mujhe andar hee andar
kuChh naahak hee pareshaan kiye jaa rahaa hai naamaakool

Conscience

Who is this useless fool inside me,
pricking me with his goad of guilt,
harassing me needlessly in my daily life?

kambakht = कम्बख़्त = stupid
naahak = नाहक = without any right; without reason
kachoT = कचोट = pinch
naamaakool = नामाकूल = mannerless or uncouth person

कम्बख़्त!

ये कौन कचोट रहा है मुझे अंदर ही अंदर
कुछ नाहक ही परेशान किए जा रहा है नामाकूल

chuTkulaa

kaasid too fir soch kar bataa
wo ha.nse the yaa muskuraaye
hamne to dil bhejaa thaa paigaam me.n
kahee.n dillagee me.n lateefaa to naa samajh baiThe wo?

Light-Hearted

My dear courier,
recollect your thoughts once again,
and recount:
was her's a gracious smile...
or a mocking laughter?
From the heart had I dispatched my message of love.
In her flippancy, might she have mistaken it for fair humor?

chuTkulaa = चुटकुला = a small or minor joke
kaaseed = क़ासिद = messenger
paigaam = पैग़ाम = message
dillagee = दिल्लगी = flippancy
lateefaa = लतीफ़ा = joke

चुटकुला

क़ासिद तू फिर सोच कर बता
वो हँसे थे या मुस्कुराए
हमने तो दिल भेजा था पैग़ाम में
कहीं दिल्लगी में लतीफ़ा तो ना समझ बैठे वो?

dal-dal

un kav-vo.n ke chakravyooha me.n uljhee zindagee
bekaar beh gayee
vakeelo.n kee bheeD-behes me.n daleele.n to ek taraf,
pai-ravee bhee hone se pehle haar gayee

Quicksand

Trapped in this labyrinth of black-robed crows,
this life was squandered purposeless and vain.
In the crowded, clouded claptrap woven by lawyers,
even my opening statement lost its argument at the onset.

daldal = दलदल = quicksand

chakravyooha = चक्रव्यूह = labyrinth

daleel = दलील = rational argument in defense of something

pairavee = पैरवी = defense; the act of arguing or lobbying on someone's behalf

देलदेल

उन कौओं के चक्रव्यूह में उलझी ज़िंदगी
बेकार बह गयी
वकीलों की भीड़–बहस में दलीलें तो एक तरफ,
पैरवी भी होने से पहले हार गयी

laazmee hai…

in imaarato.n kee chamak kuChh tez hai
inkee khiDkiyo.n par aaftaab kuChh zyaadaa meherbaa.n hai

Playing Favorites...

These skyscrapers have an extra glow about them.
The sun must bestow extra largesse on their panes.

laazmee = लाज़मी = justifiable; commensurate
aaftaab = आफ़्ताब = sun

लाज़मी है...

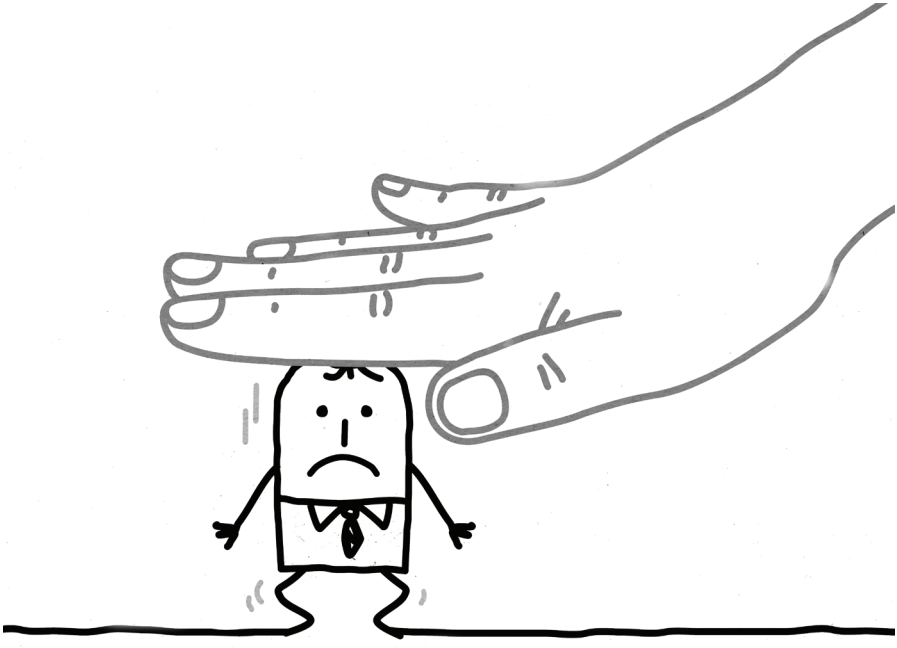
इन इमारतों की चमक कुछ तेज़ है
इनकी खिड़कियों पर आफ़ताब कुछ ज़्यादा मेहरबाँ है

hakeekat

zindagee se thakaa-haaraa maut se kyaa joojhegaa
mar jaataa hai bechaaraa

Life...Ergo Death..

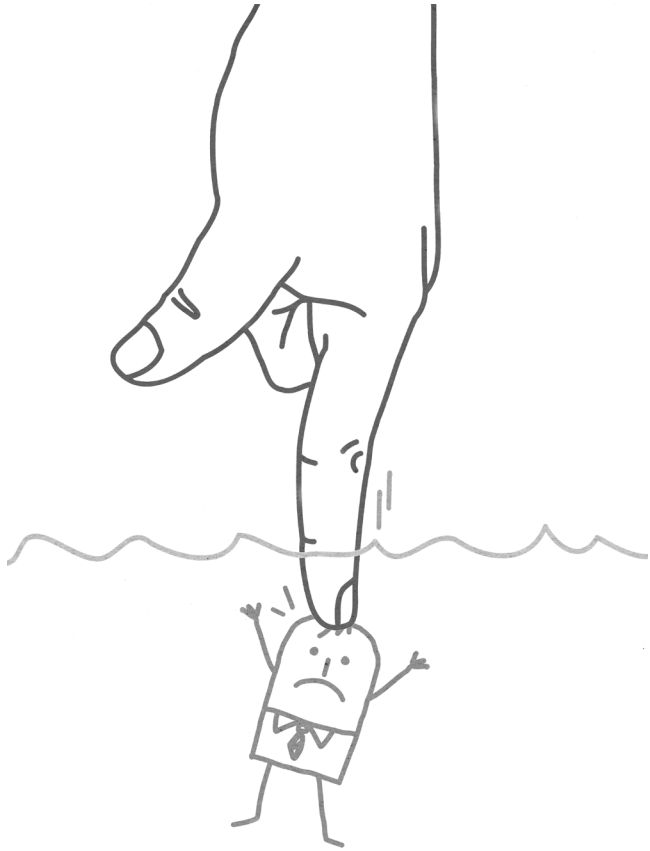
How much can he struggle,
the common man beaten down by life?
Just falls down and dies, the poor soul…



joojhnaa = जूझना = to struggle

हक़ीक़त

ज़िंदगी से थका–हारा मौत से क्या जूझेगा
मर जाता है बेचारा



au-r kyaa!

kal shab us mehfil me.n daawaa kiyaa thaa
muhabbat hazaaro.n saal kee
is shab aa gaye hai.n nayee mehfil me.n
unhee.n puraane vaado.n ke saath

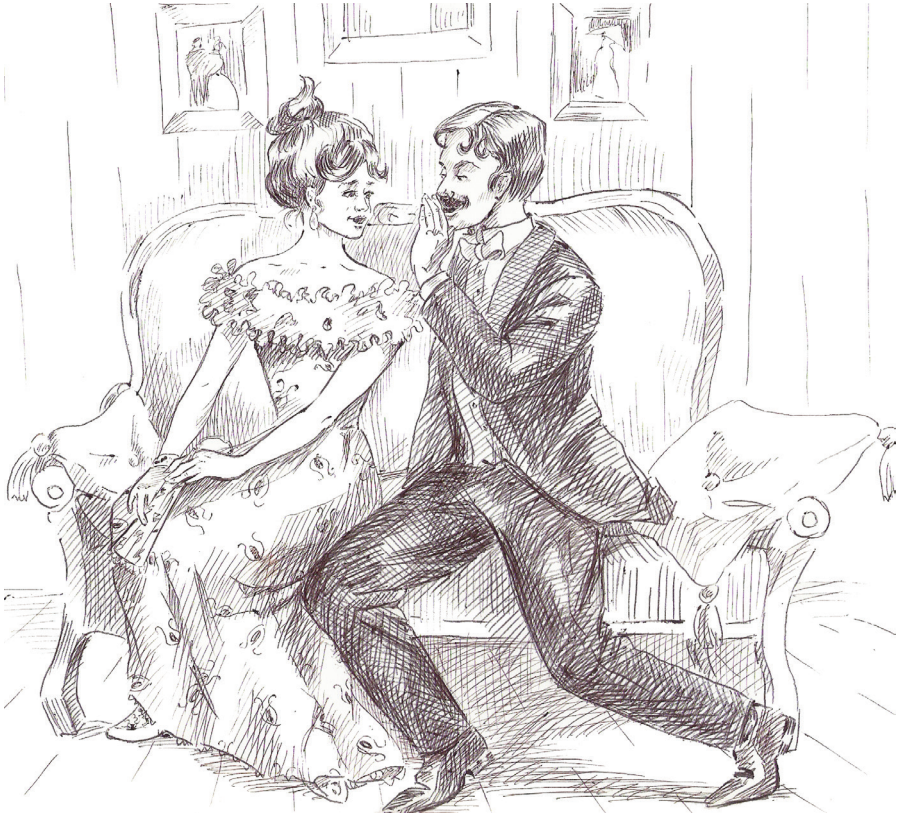
Same Old Deja Vu!

At the revelries last evening,
he had proclaimed his undying love;
love, which was to last millennia...
It's a new evening now, a new soiree, with new faces.
Here he arrives once again,
to recycle the same old promises, all anew…

shab = शब = evening

और क्या!

कल शब उस महफ़िल में दावा किया था
मुहब्बत हज़ारों साल की
इस शब आ गये हैं नयी महफ़िल में
उन्हीं पुराने वादों के साथ



tirChhaa aalam

karte nahee.n izhaar-e-raaz aalamgeer jab muskuraate hai.n
"is tirChh-e tarkash me.n teer aur bhee hai.n ka-ee"

Arched Archer

She, the Empress of the World,
reveals not the secret as she smiles:
"This arched quiver has many an arrow left for slaying."

tirChhaa = तिरछा = at an angle; skewed

izhaar = इज़हार = overt expression;

aalam = आलम = The word has many meanings It can signify "state of being"; it also means, "the world", amongst other meanings

aalamgeer = आलमगीर = emperor / empress; supreme ruler; lord of the world = शहंशाह = जहांपनाह = jahaanpanaah

तिरछा आलम

करते नहीं इज़हार–ए–राज़ आलमगीर जब मुस्कुराते हैं
"इस तिर्छे तरकश में तीर और भी हैं कई"

dekhte - dekhte

Doobne kaa jigar rakhne waale,
ruk mat! Doob ja!!
samandar ka-ee mile.nge teree kashtee ke liye,
wo aa.nkhe.n naseeb hai.n sirf ek baar

Sunken Treasures

You, who has the fortitude to withstand the depths of a sea...
Wait not! Dive down deep without delay!
Oceans there will be many for your boat to float,
but those eyes like deep blue lochs,
they won't remain in reach for long…

jigar = जिगर = heart; figuratively, it means "fortitude" or "determination to do something bold"

देखते-देखते

डूबने का जिगर रखने वाले,
रुक मत! डूब जा!!
समंदर कई मिलेंगे तेरी कश्ती के लिए,
वो आँखें नसीब हैं सिर्फ़ एक बार

kise khabar…

shamaa aur parwaane ke fasaane ka-ee
har Doobte ko tinke kaa sahaaraa khwaa-ish

duniyaa kaa dastoor...

kaun pooChhtaa hai haal us sulagte tel kaa
kise soch hai us Doobte tinke kee…

Sympathies Misplaced

Reams have been scribbled over the flame and the moth.
Every drowning soul pines for the floating straw.
Who, in his spare mind, has thought of the burning oil?
Or spared a wish for the drowning twig?
That is the way of this world...
That is just the way it is…

khabar = ख़बर = news
shamaa = शमा = flame
parvaanaa = परवाना = moth
dastoor = दस्तूर = custom
sulagnaa = सुलगना = burn gently
fasaane = फ़साने = stories; tales

किसे ख़बर...

शमा और परवाने के फ़साने कई
हर डूबते को तिनके का सहारा ख़्वाइश

दुनिया का दस्तूर...

कौन पूछता है हाल उस सुलगते तेल का
किसे सोच है उस डूबते तिनके की...

vya.n-gyaa-kaar

kabhee gaur kiyaa thaa
jis saagar me.n hamne gam Duboyaa
wo pyaalaa hameshaa Thahaake lagaataa nazar aayaa

Derision Dissolved

In a moment of retrospection did I observe once;
the goblet in which I had drowned all my sorrow,
was the faithful companion which had always mocked me.

vya.n-gya = व्यंग्य = sarcasm; sarcastic comment
vya.n-gyaa-kaar = व्यंग्याकार = a satirist; one who mocks
saagar = साग़र = "a goblet" in Urdu. In Hindi, it means "sea".
Thahaake = ठहाके = loudly mocking laughter

व्यंग्याकार

कभी गौर किया था
जिस साग़र में हमने ग़म डुबोया
वो प्याला हमेशा ठहाके लगाता नज़र आया

fir wahee…

us ek baat par saaree raat guzar gayee
guzar kar bhee jo adhooree rahee...
wo dekho!
fir shaam ho rahee hai

Offerings

On a simple point of fact, our entire night flew by;
and yet, the night remained unfulfilled...
There! Can you see?
Another evening approaches...
(with its unclaimed promises...)

adhooree = अधूरी = incomplete

फिर वही...

उस एक बात पर सारी रात गुज़र गयी
गुज़र कर भी जो अधूरी रही...

वो देखो!
फिर शाम हो रही है

intazaar

gunahgaar fir bach gayaa yahaa.n
us vaade kee miyaad guzar gayee

Escaped

Once again, the committer of a crime has escaped.
The statute of limitation has expired for that promise made.

miyaad = मियाद = an alloted period of time; statute of limitation

इंतज़ार

गुनहगार फिर बच गया यहाँ
उस वादे की मियाद गुज़र गयी

yoo.n hee…

rangeen thee mehfil
aur afwaaho.n kee gehmaa-gehmee
hamne bhee ChheD diyaa
unkaa naam bevajah

Name Dropping

The soirée was in full bloom;
rumor flowed as easy as the wine.
For no particular reason,
I floated her name on that stream innocently…

gehmaa-gehmee = गहमा–गहमी = melee; profusion of confusion
afwaah = अफ़्वाह = rumor
bevajah = बेवज़ह = without a reason; casually

यूँ ही...

रंगीन थी महफ़िल
और अफ़वाहों की गहमा–गहमी
हमने भी छेड़ दिया
उनका नाम बेवज़ह

gunahgaar

kisne lagaa-ee ye aag
kaun raakh me.n gum huaa
khudaa detaa rahaa apnee khudaa-ee kaa vaastaa
aur ham bas sunte rahe

Criminal...

Who ignited this fire?
How many were lost in its ashes?
The good Lord kept offering
His reasons for this savagery,
And I… I just listened passively.

khudaa-ee = खुदाई = godhood

vaastaa = वास्ता = a verbal defense; an invocation of some recommendation or assurance

गुनहगार

किसने लगाई ये आग
कौन राख में गुम हुआ
खुदा देता रहा अपनी खुदाई का वास्ता
और हम बस सुनते रहे

daayre

toofaan to simaT gayaa wakt ke dariyaa me.n
ChhoD gayaa bas kuChh sawaal gehre se

Post Mortem

The storm, it gathered together its wings,
and receded back into the bottle of Time;
all it left in its destructive wake
were grave questions of profound depths...

daayre = दायरे = range; radius
simaT gayaa = सिमट गया = pulled itself in; contracted
vakt = वक़्त = time
dariyaa = दरिया = river

दायरे

तूफ़ान तो सिमट गया वक़्त के दरिया में
छोड़ गया बस कुछ सवाल गहरे से

pighaltee aas

us sulagtee garmee kaa ehsaas,
wo bikhree-bikhree see chaadar,
ek yaad jo aaj bhee jhulsaa de
meree khaamosh see shaam ko

Melting Fire...of Desire...

The sensation of that simmering heat...
those tangled, tousled sheets...
that remembrance,
which to this day,
can inflame a quiet evening of mine…

pighaltee = पिघलती = melting
aas = आस = desire; wish
sulagnaa = सुलगना = burn gently

पिघलती आस

उस सुलगती गर्मी का एहसास,
वो बिखरी–बिखरी सी चादर,
एक याद जो आज भी झुलसा दे
मेरी खामोश सी शाम को

pai-ra-vee

us din behte paanee ko dekhaa
ek fariyaad kee sun-vaa-ee yaad aa gayee

Petition

I saw a gentle stream of water that day.
T'was the flowing memory, it seemed,
of a petition I had submitted for her judgment long ago…

fariyaad = फरियाद = petition

पैरवी

उस दिन बहते पानी को देखा
एक फरियाद की सुनवाई याद आ गयी

nayaa siraa

manzil se faaslaa kuChh kadam hee reh gayaa thaa
usne raah moD lee kisee aur khayaal me.n

Re-Directed

A few more steps he had to take...
and his journey would have found completion.
What thought was it, at the moment last,
which made him swerve to a new quest?

siraa = सिरा = one end of something
faaslaa = फ़ासला = distance

नया सिरा

मंज़िल से फ़ासला कुछ कदम ही रह गया था
उसने राह मोड़ ली किसी और ख़याल में

afsos…

yahaa.n n logo.n kee kamee hai n paanee kee
kamee sirf ek chulloo kee hai
aur naayaab sharm kee

Submerged Shame

There is no dearth of people
nor water... here.
All we are missing
is the strength to drown ourselves
when we misplace
the worrying shame of an upright conscience...

afsos = अफ़सोस = regret
chullu = चुल्लू = cupped palm
naayaab = नायाब = novel
sharm = शर्म = shame

अफ़सोस...

यहाँ न लोगों की कमी है न पानी की
कमी सिर्फ़ एक चुल्लू की है
और नायाब शर्म की

dhobee kaa kuttaa…

mehfil se nikalte hai.n
wo kehte nahee.n "baiThiye"
ab muDte bantaa hai n jaate
ilaahee ab to mazaa lenaa ChhoD de

Vacillation

I rose to leave the soiree,
hoping to hear, "Wait a while longer!"
But she insists not..;
O Dilemma!
Hovering in this embarrassing indecision:
should I continue with my farcical sham,
or swallow pride to rejoin the revelry?
O dear Lord, hold your wicked sense of humor!

dhobee = धोबी = laudryman

kuttaa = कुत्ता = dog

dhobee ka kuttaa = धोबी का कुत्ता = this is a Hindi idiom which is invoked when someone is "neither here nor there", caught in indecision halfway and hence, has lost a good opportunity

ilaahee = इलाही = God

धोबी का कुत्ता...

महफ़िल से निकलते हैं
वो कहते नहीं "बैठिए"
अब मुड़ते बनता है न जाते
इलाही अब तो मज़ा लेना छोड़ दे

ek jhooTh…

kahaa.n jaane kee zid hai, ai dil!
wo saraab hai,
naa manzil armaa.n kee

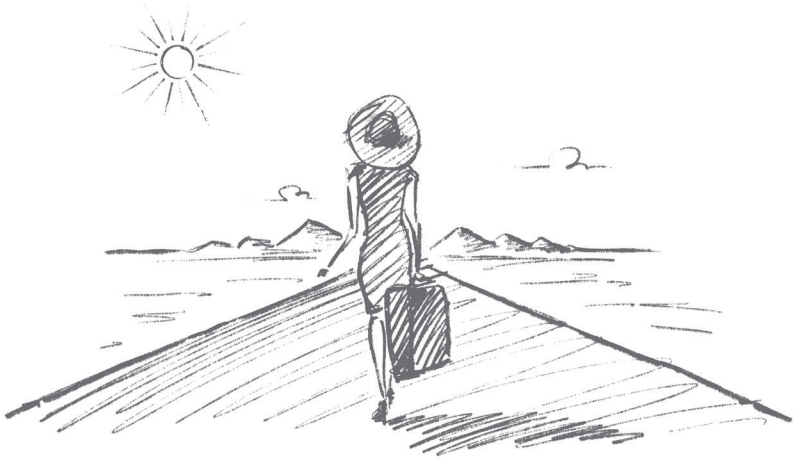
Mirage

Why this dogged pursuit of that goal-post, my friend?
That which you see there is but an illusion,
not the destination of your desires…

saraab = सराब = mirage = मृगजल

एक झूठ...

कहाँ जाने की ज़िद है, ऐ दिल!
वो सराब है
ना मंज़िल अरमाँ की



izhaare haal

haal pooChh liyaa unho.n-ne yoo.n hee
maar Daalaa aisee kaifiyat ne unkee

Solicitous

As a matter of politeness she had inquired after my health.
Oh! How her casual solicitousness has slain me!

izhaar = इज़हार = overt expression;

kaifiyat = कैफियत = the word has many meanings. In this context, "solicitousness"

इज़हारे हाल

हाल पूछ लिया उन्होंने यूँ ही
मार डाला ऐसी कैफियत ने उनकी

anjaan mulaakaat

us khataa kee kyaa vajah doo.n
aur kyaa samjhaau.n
un anjaan ho.nTho.n kee yaad

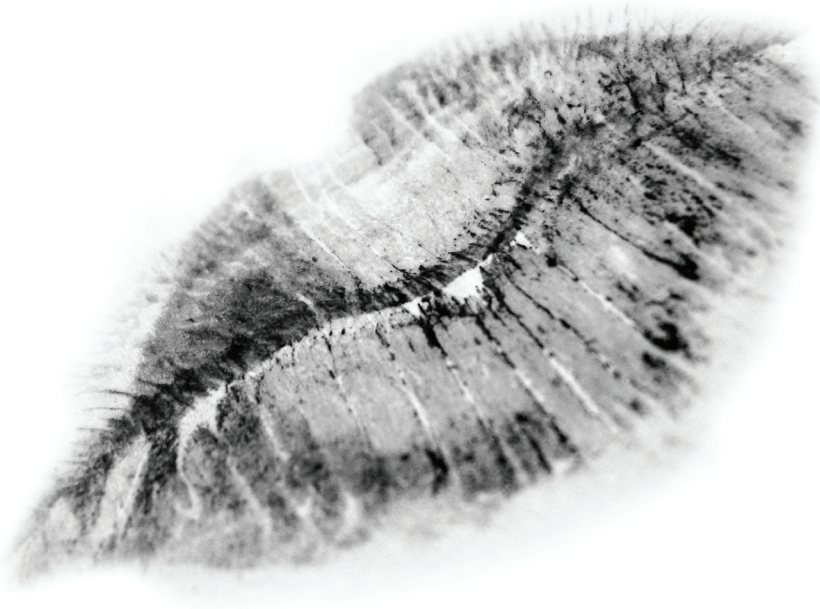
Infidel Lips...

What excuses can I offer
for that unwitting error,
and what description can I give
to the memory of those unknown lips…

mulaakaat = मुलाकात = a meeting with someone
khataa = ख़ता = small mistake
samjhaau.n = समझाऊँ = explain; make someone understand

अंजान मुलाकात

उस ख़ता की क्या वज़ह दूँ
और क्या समझाऊँ
उन अनजान होंठों की याद



nisaar

ham bhee unke ishk me.n soofee ban gaye
kuChh zamaane ne hamko looT liyaa
kuChh zamaanaa hamne unpe luTaa diyaa

Martyred

Enamored by her love, I've turned a Sufi.
In some measure, the world has looted me.
In good measure, I've forfeited that same world for her.

nisaar = निसार = left without the essence; martyr; having given up everything (for someone or something)

soofee = सूफ़ी = an Islamic mystic; one who is lost in life's inebriation

निसार

हम भी उनके इश्क में सूफ़ी बन गये
कुछ ज़माने ने हमको लूट लिया
कुछ ज़माना हमने उनपे लुटा दिया

sawaaliyat

n meraa jawaab hai, n teraa jawaab hai
bas benakaab sawaalo.n kee gaflat ban kar reh gaye hai.n

Entanglement

I may be my own rhetoric; a peerless paragon;
your enigma, no doubt, is without riposte as well.
Tangled up in this tableau of coy love, then,
all we've woven
is a knotted weave of indecision...

sawaaliyat = सवालियत = interrogation
gaflat = गफ़लत = confusion; carelessness
benakaab = बेनक़ाब = without a veil

सवालियत

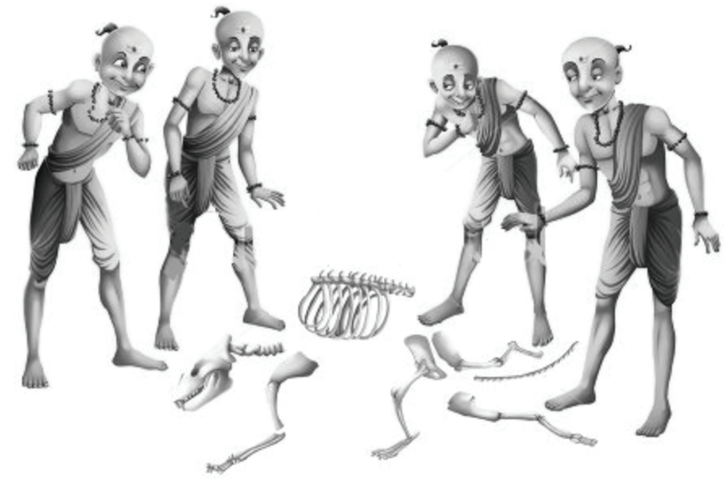
न मेरा जवाब है, न तेरा जवाब है
बस बेनक़ाब सवालों की गफ़लत बन कर रह गये हैं

dharmaandh

ye dharm ke rakhwaale hai.n
ya dharm ke ra-khai-l?

Charlatans

Are these men the purveyors of religion,
or are they its pimps and prostitutes?



dharmaandh = धर्मांध = blinded by religion
rakhail = रखैल = mistress; a kept woman

धर्मांध

ये धर्म के रखवाले हैं
या धर्म के रखैल?

hakeem-e-aalaa

ishk naazuk hai, tabeeyat naasaaz
ab to karaahne kee ijaazat de de

Merciless...

My desires delicate,
my soul in malaise,
would you deny me my helpless sighs as well?

hakeem = हकीम = doctor
hakeem-e-aalaa = हकीम–ए–आला = a doctor who heals gods
naasaaz = नासाज़ = of some discomfort

हकीम-ए-आला

इश्क नाज़ुक है, तबीयत नासाज़
अब तो कराहने की इजाज़त दे दे

khisaktee nee.nv

Dhah jaate hai.n har roz duniyaa ko dekhte dekhte
is bin paanee ke manzar par
ye kin r-e-t ke Tilo.n par banaa-e hai.n hamne
apne apne ghar

Shifting Sands

The spirit crumbles every day, watching this world,
on this arid land bereft of soul...
Oh! On what barren sands have we built our homes!

khisaktee = खिसकती = shifting from under; sliding or slipping
manzar = मंज़र = landscape; a scene; a place
Tilaa = टिला = hillock

खिसकती नींव

ढह जाते हैं हर रोज़ दुनिया को देखते देखते
इस बिन पानी के मंज़र पर
ये किन रेत के टिलों पर बनाए हैं हमने
अपने अपने घर

zurrat

wo kaisaa baazaar hogaa
jahaa.n ye begairat aawaam khareed-tee hai
apne zehen se guftagoo kee himaakat…

A Market Lowdown...

One wonders about the nature of that bazaar
where the shameless populace buys its courage
to have a dialogue with its conscience…

zurrat = ज़ुर्रत = daring; insolence; with boldness
begairat = बेग़ैरत = without shame or consideration for society
aawaam = आवाम = public; common people
jehen = ज़हन = conscience; inner mind
guftagoo = गुफ़्तगू = dialogue; conversation
himaakat = हिमाकत = chutzpaz; insolence

जुर्रत

वो कैसा बाज़ार होगा
जहाँ ये बेग़ैरत आवाम ख़रीदती है
अपने ज़हन से गुफ़्तगू की हिमाकत...

sa-br

Dhalte sooraj ko kaaTnee hogee gehree raat
fir aasmaan kee bulandiyaa.n Chhoone

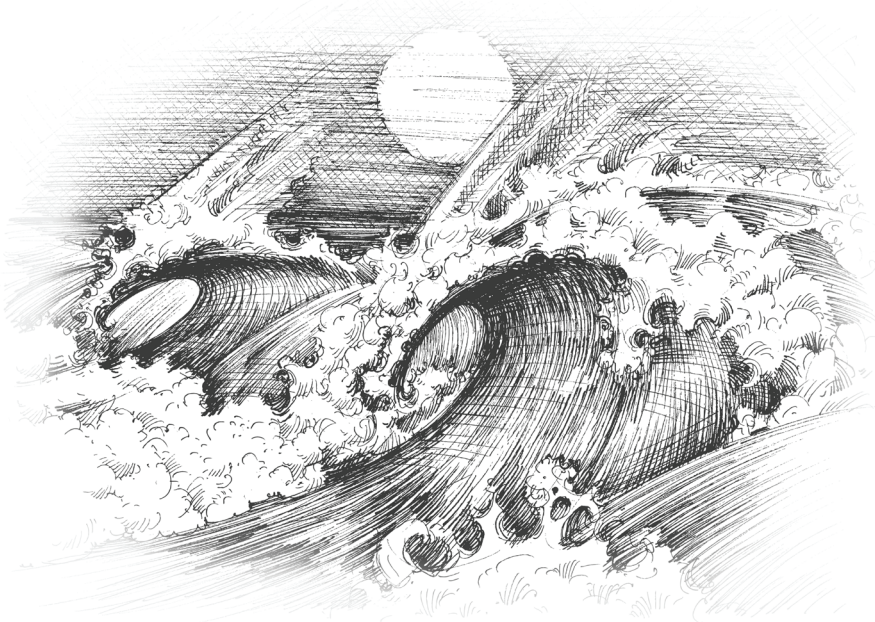
Slingshot

The sinking sun, it must bide its time,
and patiently wait for the night to pass,
before it can reach for the zenith once again.

sabr = सब्र = patience
bulandiyaa.n = बुलंदियाँ = terrific heights; sky-high

सुब्ह

ढलते सूरज को काटनी होगी गहरी रात
फिर आसमान की बुलंदियाँ छूने



andhaa-dhundh

haa-y! kis kadar dauDaa umr bhar
aur saaree pyaas ChhoD kar
aas kaa kamanDal liye
us mrigjal ke peeChhe...

Blind Race

Lo! How I have run all my life!
With such vigor!
Forgetting all my thirst,
chasing with an empty bowl of hope,
those glittering waters of a mirage!

andhaa-dhundh = अंधाधुंध = in a blind rush

kamanDal = कमंडल = a small vessel with a handle to carry water; a waterpot

अंधाधुंध

हाय! किस कदर दौड़ा उम्र भर
और सारी प्यास छोड़ कर
आस का कमंडल लिए
उस मृगजल के पीछे...

marz-e-dawaa

suraahee se unkee seedhe dil me.n utree hai
ab ye pyaalaa bhee naakaam ho chalaa hai

Hour-Glass

From her shapely flask has the wine flowed into my heart;
now this tepid chalice has turned so worthless…

marz = मर्ज़ = malaise; affliction; ill-health
dawaa = दवा = medicine
marz-e-dawaa = मर्ज़–ए–दवा = medicine to cure an illness

मर्ज़े-ए-दवा

सुराही से उनकी सीधे दिल में उतरी है
अब ये प्याला भी नाकाम हो चला है

kyaa khoyaa, kyaa paayaa

kuChh khabar nahee.n paDee
duniyaa kaa eemaan khareed-te baTorte
kab mai.n be-eemaan ho gayaa

Insidious

It happened without notice nor warning...
how, while corrupting the world's morality,
my own moral fibers were progressively shredded…

eemaan = ईमान = inner probity; uprightness & honesty
be-eemaan = बे–ईमान = without honesty or conscience

क्या खोया, क्या पाया

कुछ ख़बर नहीं पड़ी
दुनिया का ईमान खरीदते बटोरते
कब मैं बे–ईमान हो गया

ikraahaa

saakee ab itnee pilaa rehbar ko
fir ek hee raah yaad rahe ...

unkee o-r

Messenger Mine...

O keeper of fine wines!
Ply my messenger with so much of it
that he remembers only one straight path…
…toward her…

ikraahaa = इकराहा = single track
rehbar = रहबर = messenger

इकराहा

साकी अब इतनी पिला रहबर को
फिर एक ही राह याद रहे ...

उनकी ओर

ai-laan-e-khaamoshee

kisee ne haule se pooChhaa thaa wo raaz mehfil me.n
hamaaree chuppee ne kar diyaa ailaan-e-zamaanaa

Whispered Nothings

Someone had gently enquired
about my little secret in that party.
My studied silence loudly announced my desire
to everyone who watched.

ailaan = ऐलान = announcement

ailaan-e-khamoshee = ऐलान–ए–खामोशी = an announcement made by a silence

haule se = हौले से = softly

raaz = राज़ = secret

chuppee = चुप्पी = tight-lips; act of staying mum

ऐलान-ए-खामोशी

किसी ने हौले से पूछा था वो राज़ महफ़िल में
हमारी चुप्पी ने कर दिया ऐलान–ए–ज़माना

hamdard

in begaano.n se kyo.n pooChhtee ho meraa haal
yahee to khillee kar kar gaye lahooluhaan abhee

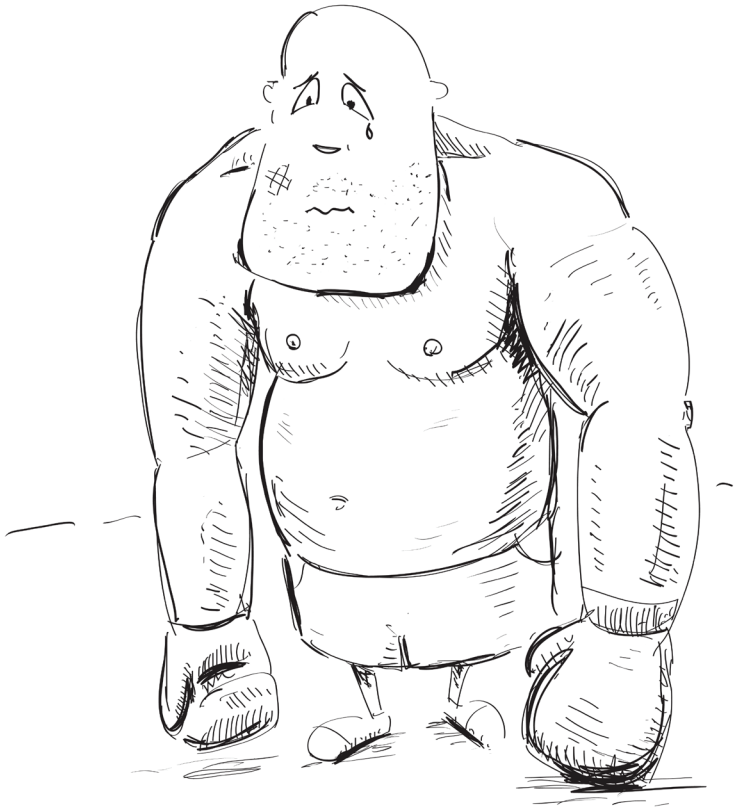
Well-Wishers

Why ask these callous strangers of my well-being?
They are the solicitous mockers
who have bloodied my psyche…

hamdard = हमदर्द = well-wisher
begaanaa = बेगाना = one who does not know
lahuluhaan = लहूलुहान = bloodied; covered with injuries oozing blood

हमदर्द

इन बेगानों से क्यों पूछती हो मेरा हाल
यही तो खिल्ली कर कर गये लहूलुहान अभी



yalgaar

gilaa nahee.n tujhse kisee baat kaa par kehnaa zaroor hai
ek baar to rok liyaa hotaa apne kaTiyaar ko, shehryaar!

At Daggers Drawn

I have nothing to complain of you,
but say this I must:
Once,
just once,
perhaps you could have considered
restraining your dagger, O Ruler of my Heart!

yalgaar = यलगार = sudden attack
gilaa = गिला = complaint
kaTiyaar = कटियार = dagger
shehryaar = शहरयार = a king; a prince

यलगार

गिला नहीं तुझसे किसी बात का पर कहना ज़रूर है
एक बार तो रोक लिया होता अपने कटियार को, शहरयार!

khillee-aam

ab kis baat pe ha.nse.n kis pe nahee.n
mehfil hee mazaake-dil ban kar reh gayee hai

Sense Of Humor

No sense has been left with me
to discriminate between
the jokes on which I should laugh,
and ones to which I should give a pass...
Life itself now looms as a humorous soirée,
partying heartily at my expense…

khillee = खिल्ली = mockery
mazaake-dil = मज़ाके–दिल = mockery of heart
khillee-aam = खिल्ली–आम = subject to common ridicule by people at large

खिल्ली-आम

अब किस बात पे हँसें किस पे नहीं
महफ़िल ही मज़ाके–दिल बनकर रह गयी है

andher-saathee

kisee manzar pe naa ruknaa dhundhalkaa hote hee
kuChh sitaare bhee saath de.nge chalte chalte

Eventide

Do not break your pace when dusk falls, O Traveler;
there be stars in the firmament
which serve as trusted guides, too.

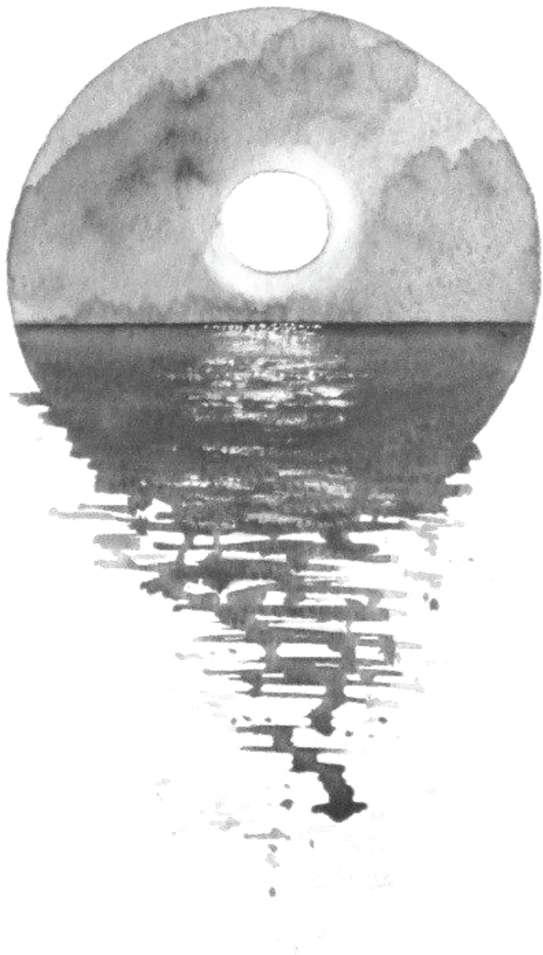
andher-saathee = अंधेरसाथी = a companion or friend who stays with you when it is dark outside

manzar = मंज़र = landscape; a scene; a place

dhundhalkaa = धुंधल्का = dusk; a time of faded light

अंधेरसाथी

किसी मंज़र पे ना रुकना धुंधल्का होते ही
कुछ सितारे भी साथ देंगे चलते चलते



pat-thar dil…

kisee ne Theek kahaa thaa
mat kar fariyaad dil-e-armaan kee
ye kaazee bhee banaa hai taraash kar
abr-e-patthar se

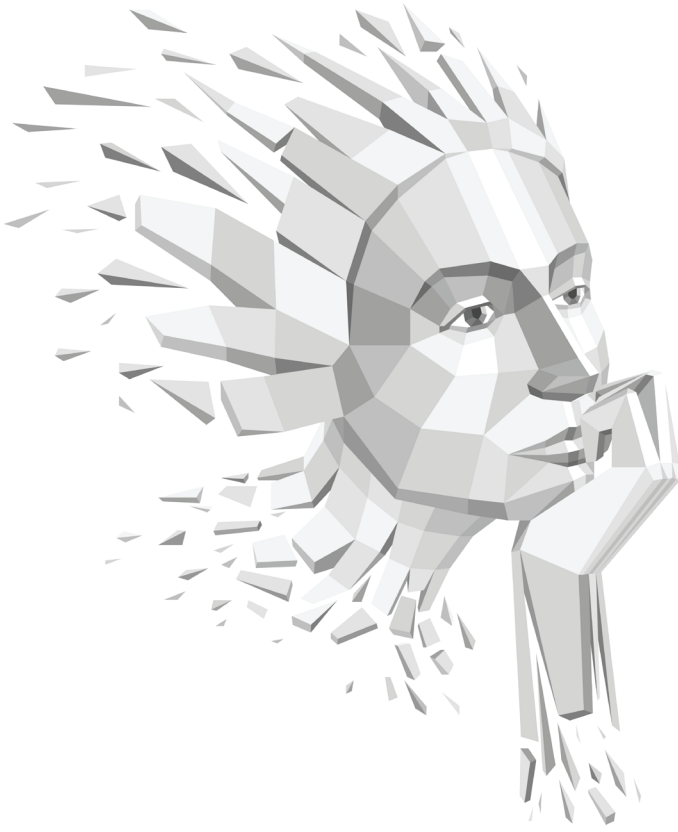
Sculpted Stone

There is truth in what they say:
t'is futile, this submission of plaintive petitions...
For that arbiter of the desires of heart
is chiseled out of pristinely unyielding marble…

kaazee = काज़ी = judge
fariyaad = फरियाद = appeal
dil-e-armaan = दिल–ए–अरमान = desire of the heart
abr-e-patthar = अब्र–ए–पत्थर = marble
taraash kar = तराश कर = by carving

पत्थर दिल...

किसी ने ठीक कहा था
मत कर फरियाद दिल–ए–अरमान की
ये काज़ी भी बना है तराश कर
अब्र–ए–पत्थर से



man-tarang

us din jo Chhuaa thaa unho.n-ne anjaane me.n
wo bijlee aaj bhee kaundh-tee hai jaise sirhaane me.n

Feather Touch

Quite by accident had she brushed against me once;
that sizzling lightning crackles through me to this day…

man-tarang = मन–तरंग = a wave of joy in the heart
anjaane me.n = अंजाने में = done out of ignorance or intention
kaundhtee hai = कौंधती है = flash blindingly
sirhaane = सिरहाने = next to something

मन-तरंग

उस दिन जो छुआ था उन्होंने अंजाने में
वो बिजली आज भी कौंधती है जैसे सिरहाने में

geh-raa-i-yaa.n

is sheher kee nee.nv thoDee kachchee hai
kaafee satahee kism ke log rehte hai.n yahaa.n

Shallow Foundation

The foundations of this city appear weak and shallow.
Perhaps it is in the nature of these people
to skim just the surface of human affairs...

nee.nv = नींव = foundation
kachhee = कच्ची = not ripe; weak; not fully developed
satahee = सतही = of the surface; superficial

गहराइयाँ

इस शहर की नींव थोड़ी कच्ची है
काफ़ी सतही क़िस्म के लोग रहते हैं यहाँ

vajood baavajood

yoo.n to us darakht me.n bhee daraare.n thee kaee
rok n sakee.n uskee bulandee uske iraado.n ke aage

Handicap

As it stood, the trunk of this tree
suffered pernicious cracks eating away at its soul.
But behold!
Even they could not contain its mighty spirit
in its defiant reach for the sky…

vajood = वजूद = meaning of existence; identity; self-esteem

darakht = दरख़्त = strong tree

baavajood = बावजूद = against obstacles; without consideration of other things

bulandee = बुलंदी = zenith; great height

वजूद बावजूद

यूँ तो उस दरख़्त में भी दरारें थी कई
रोक न सकीं उसकी बुलंदी उसके इरादों के आगे

behlaavaa

zindagee bhar Dhoo.nDhte rahe ek sach ko
kyaa khabar thee
jhooTh se bhee behel jaataa ye dil

Wandering Truth

All my life, I kept searching for that one truth...
Who knew...
that a simple lie would have sufficed...

behelaavaa = बहलावा = something designed to easily convince or distract

behel jaataa = बहल जाता = would have been easily consoled or distracted

बहलावा

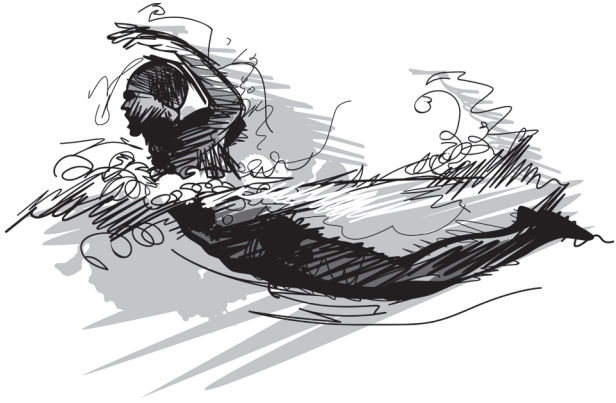
ज़िंदगी भर ढूँढते रहे एक सच को
क्या ख़बर थी
झूठ से भी बहल जाता ये दिल

gotaakhor

samandar kee lehro.n pe khelne waale,
samandar kee gehraa-ee se dostee karnaa seekh
sunaa hai,
motee paanee me.n tairaa nahee.n karte

Deep Dives

O Surfer, playing upon the tides of the sea;
learn to befriend the depths of the ocean.
One hears
that them pearls, they are not to be found
floating around as easy driftwood.



gotaakhor = ग़ोताख़ोर = deep diver
tairnaa = तैरना = to swim

ग़ोताख़ोर

समंदर की लहरों पे खेलने वाले,
समंदर की गहराई से दोस्ती करना सीख
सुना है,
मोती पानी में तैरा नहीं करते

udheD-boon

inko Taa.nko.n-Taa.nko.n se baandh rakhaa hai
ye katre pyaar ke jo giraa gaye ho tum naasamjhee me.n

Swatches

With delicate stitches have I woven together
these trailing threads of love you've scattered without care…

udheD-boon = उधेड़–बून = (literal) to stitch and unstitch; (figurative) restlessness; a worried thought process; entangled in a dilemma

Taa.nkaa = टाँका = a stitch

katraa = कतरा = droplets; tiny piece

उधेड़-बून

इनको टाँकों–टाँकों से बाँध रखा है
ये कतरे प्यार के जो गिरा गये हो तुम नासमझी में

ga.ngaajal

Thahro! n peeyo ye maikhaanaa abhee!
masjid se mehfil-e-mehmaa.n aa rahe.n hai.n

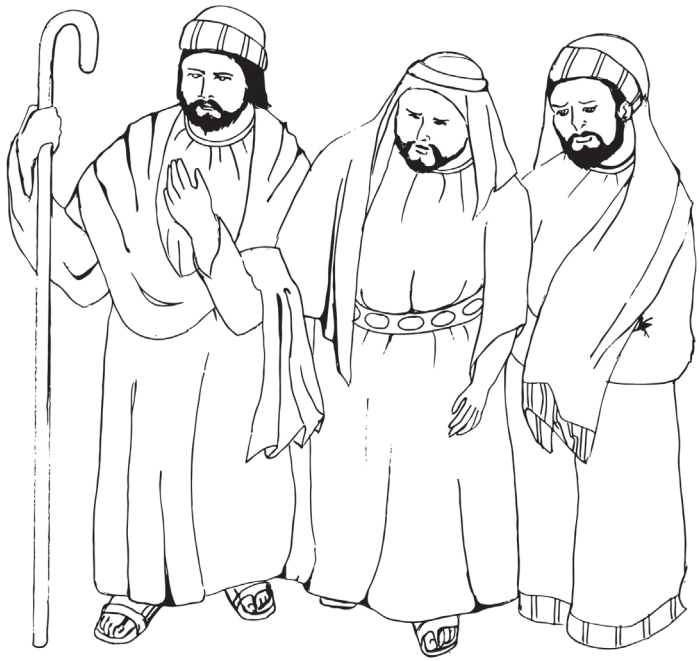
Holy Water

Do not drink up the wine-house just yet, my friends!
Wait a while.
A few guests of the evening
are on their way to the tavern
from the house of God.

ga.ngaajal = गंगाजल = water of the Ganges = holy water
maikhaanaa = मैखाना = house of alcoholic drinks
mehfil-e-mehmaa.n = महफ़िल–ए–मेहमाँ = guests of honor at a party

गंगाजल

ठहरो! न पीयो ये मैखाना अभी!
मस्जिद से महफ़िल–ए–मेहमाँ आ रहें हैं



andekhee

o mallaah!
kabhee jhaa.nk kar to dekh
is jheel kee satah ke neeche!

Sub Rosa

O Oarsman!
For once, observe the depths,
which lie under the lake's surface!

mallaah = मल्लाह = oarsman
jheel = झील = lake
jhaa.nk kar = झाँक कर = by peeping or looking by reaching over

अनदेखी

ओ मल्लाह!
कभी झाँक कर तो देख
इस झील की सतह के नीचे!

khushnumaa

uDtee khabar sunee thee
hamaaree badnaamee kee us shaam
kyaa kahe.n?
raat baDee meeThee nee.nd aa-ee

Famy!

The dusk brought news from the rumor-mill
of my name linked to hers without cause.
How delicious did that infamy sound!
How sweet the sleep was that night!

khushnumaa = खुशनुमा = happy
badnaamee = बदनामी = ill-repute
meeThee nee.nd = मीठी नींद = sweet, happy sleep

खुशनुमा

उड़ती ख़बर सुनी थी
हमारी बदनामी की उस शाम
क्या कहें?
रात बड़ी मीठी नींद आई

rukte-rukte hee sahee

umr bhar sochte rahe
kaise guzregee zindagee unke binaa
naa sochte
to bhee nikal hee jaatee Theek-Thaak

But At What Cost?

All my life a thought kept me worried:
"How shall I traverse this long road without her?"
Now that I've traversed this life,
I suppose,
I would have done fine without that thought…

Theek-Thaak = ठीक–ठाक = unobjectionable; in a acceptable manner

रुकते-रुकते ही सही

उम्र भर सोचते रहे
कैसे गुज़रेगी ज़िंदगी उनके बिना
ना सोचते
तो भी निकल ही जाती ठीक–ठाक

jamaa-poonjee

kaise bahaa doo.n ye aa.nsoo teree yaad me.n
ye aa.nsoo hee to de rahe the saath tere jaane ke baad

Liquid Sorrow

Tell me how I can afford to shed these precious tears in your memory...
They, who were my sole companions of faith after you had left…

poonjee = पूँजी = wealth
jamaa-poonjee = जमा–पूँजी = savings; accumulated wealth

जमा-पूँजी

कैसे बहा दूँ ये आँसू तेरी याद में
ये आँसू ही तो दे रहे थे साथ तेरे जाने के बाद

abhee n jaao...

ye baat kyaa ChheDee jaane kee saakee
ab ye suraahee bhee pilaa-e-gee mehfil kee maayoosee

Stay!

Why have you broached it,
this thought of departure, my sommelier!
Now even the decanter will weep out
the saturnine emotions of the soiree…

maayoosee = मायूसी = sadness; despondency

अभी न जाओ...

ये बात क्या छेड़ी जाने की साकी
अब ये सुराही भी पिलाएगी महफ़िल की मायूसी

kaid-e-aksaaee

us sheeshe me.n kyo.n kaid kar rakhaa hai ek ar-se se mere saakee
ab is aks ko ashk me.n beh jaane de
shaayad apnee tanhaa-ee bhee le jaa-e ye apnee khumaaree me.n

Uncork It

Why have you bottled it in that brittle flask, O Keeper of Wines?
Let this mirage flow out with my hot tears now.
Perhaps it will drown my lonesomeness
in its intoxicating flow as well…

kaid = क़ैद = imprisonment

aks = अक्स = image; own reflection

kaid-e-aksaaee = क़ैद–ए–अक्साई = entrapment or imprisonment of the image or reflection

tanhaaee = तन्हाई = lonesomeness; solitude

khumaaree = ख़ुमारी = swirling intoxication

क़ैद-ए-अक्सुई

उस शीशे में क्यों क़ैद कर रखा है एक अरसे से मेरे साकी
अब इस अक्स को अश्क में बह जाने दे
शायद अपनी तन्हाई भी ले जाए ये अपनी ख़ुमारी में

pai-ro.n tale

khwaa-i-she.n ghistee gayee.n zindagee tale
jaise chal rahaa thaa unpe koi bhaaree bojh liye
aarzoo-o.n kaa wo taraazoo
wo bhee ab kabaaDee kee amaanat ho chalaa hai

Eroded

Ambitions and desires kept wearing thin
under the soles of a leaden life;
t'was as if someone had been treading on them with a heavy load.
The scales on which I measured their heft all my life...
alas, those scales are now consigned to the scrap-yard as well.

khwaaish = ख़्वाइश = wish; desire
ghisnaa = घिसना = getting worn out, esp. through friction
aarzoo = आरज़ू = strong desire
taraazoo = तराज़ू = scale used for weighing
kabaaDee = कबाड़ी = a recycler of junk material

पैरों तले

ख़्वाइशें घिसती गयीं ज़िंदगी तले
जैसे चल रहा था उनपे कोई भारी बोझ लिए
आरज़ूओं का वो तराज़ू
वो भी अब कबाड़ी की अमानत हो चला है

galti-yaa.n

aadmiyo.n kee fitrat hee hai
galat samay par galat jagah rehne kee
bevakoof!
apnee shaadee ke din bhee haazir ho jaate hai.n

Mistimings

It is in the very nature of men
to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.
The Fools!
They show up on their own wedding days as well!

fitrat = फ़ितरत = nature
haazir = हाज़िर = present; attendance

ग़लतियाँ

आदमियों की फ़ितरत ही है
ग़लत समय पर ग़लत जगह रहने की
बेवकूफ़!
अपनी शादी के दिन भी हाज़िर हो जाते हैं

muftkhor

vaise to ka-ee tamaashgeero.n ne dekhaa khel
bas do-chaar hee paise fe.nk gaye

Schadenfreude

Many were the spectators who saw the spectacle.
Only a few rewarded it with some coins…

muftkhor = मुफ़्तखोर = one who enjoys something on the sly without paying for it, even though a payment is expected

tamaashgeer = तमाशगीर = spectators

मुफ़्तखोर

वैसे तो कई तमाशगीरों ने देखा खेल
बस दो–चार ही पैसे फेंक गये

fidaa

unko dekhaa thaa ek baar
zindagee ne takalluf kar liyaa
varnaa aisee to koi baat n thee
jo ham unpe shaheed naa hu-e

Martyred

Such a pretty face it was!
Alas!
Life's diffidence raised its shy walls.
Such minor excuses,
for not courting martyrdom right then and there!

fidaa = फ़िदा = to get enchanted; to get martyred in enchantment
takalluf = तकल्लुफ = formality; a denial arising out of a sense of formality
shaheed = शहीद = martyr

फ़िदा

उनको देखा था एक बार
ज़िंदगी ने तकल्लुफ कर लिया
वरना ऐसी तो कोई बात न थी
जो हम उनपे शहीद ना हुए

shahaadat

kitno.n ne hee saahil kaa sahaaraa paayaa unse
kyaa huaa ke saare tinke bikhre the
bas kuChh bas-e gho.nslo.n se

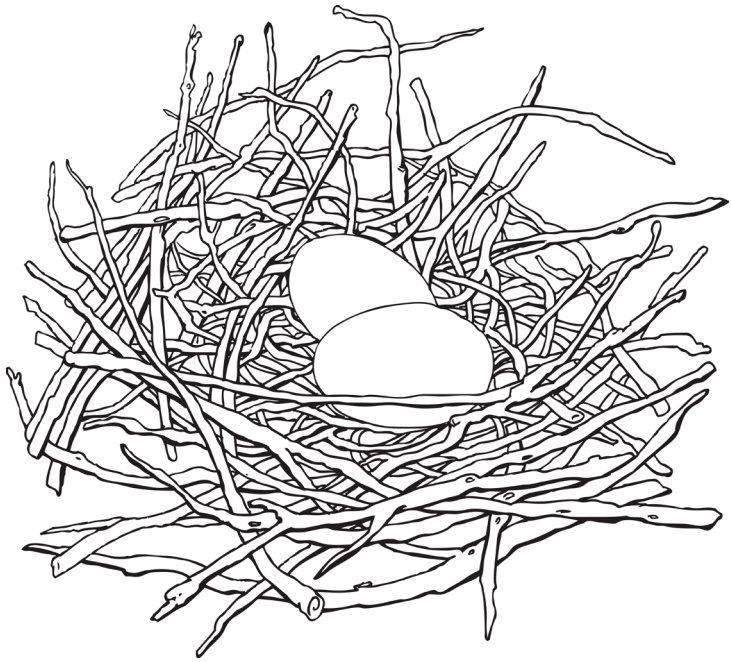
The Needs Of Many Outweigh...

Mere straws they were,
but so many had floated with their aid,
to reach the shores of solace.
Of what consequence, then,
the fact that they all came
from the destruction of but a few settled nests?

shahaadat = शहादत = martyrdom
saahil = साहिल = shore
tinkaa = तिनका = straw
gho.nslaa = घोंसला = nest

शहादत

कितनों ने ही साहिल का सहारा पाया उनसे
क्या हुआ के सारे तिनके बिखरे थे
बस कुछ बसे घोंसलों से



nadiyaa kee dhaaraa

aa maa.njhee, kahee.n door le chal
lagtaa nahee.n dil ab
in naa-hak saahilo.n se

Sail Away...

Boatman, take me somewhere faraway...
There is no solace for me anymore,
nor any claim,
on these frivolous banks…

maa.njhee = माँझी = one who rows a boat
naa-hak = ना–हक़ = without rights

नदिया की धारा

आ माँझी, कहीं दूर ले चल
लगता नहीं दिल अब
इन ना–हक़ साहिलों से

halaahal

unDel de suraahee halak me.n saakee
kab tak Dhoo.nDoo.n pyaale me.n katraa katraa

Bottoms Up

Pour that flask bottom-up down my gullet, dear sommelier;
torment me not with pitiful droplets in my goblet…

halaahal = हलाहल = strong poison
unDel de = उंड़ेल दे = pour
katraa = कतरा = fibre; tiny amount

हलाहल

उंड़ेल दे सुराही हलक में साकी
कब तक ढूँडूँ प्याले में कतरा कतरा

mukhtasar see baat

raat Dhalee
aa.nkh khulee
zindagee yaad aa-ee
...
rozmarra kee baat hu-ee
koi nayee to thee nahee.n
ek loo hee chalee thee registaan me.n
bin chappal ke pairo.n se

Of Little Note

The night passed away in its sleep.
Morning brought the remembrance of life.
…
It was a common happenstance, that waking;
nothing new;
just a breeze of infernal air
walking bare feet on my arid soul...

mukhtasar = मुख़्तसर = concise; brief; short
rozmarra = रोज़मर्रा = of daily occurrence
loo = लू = simoom = a breeze of hot air
chappal = चप्पल = foot-wear

मुख़्तसर सी बात

रात ढली
आँख खुली
ज़िंदगी याद आई
...
रोज़मर्रा की बात हुई
कोई नयी तो थी नहीं
एक लू ही चली थी रेगिस्तान में
बिन चप्पल के पैरों से

ishk nahee.n aasaa.n

shekh saahab kee naseehat thee
ye aag kaa dariyaa hai aur Doob ke jaanaa hai
lo, hamne bhee aag lagaa dee hai is paanee me.n
kar diye hai.n naav kee nee.nv me.n suraakh
bas,
ab Doobne kaa intazaar hai
thoDaa saa intazaar…

Conditions Precedent

A famous poet (Jigar Muradabadi) had once counseled:
"Love is not easy, my friend. Assume it is a river of fire;
and one must swim submerged to reach the other shore"
So here I am, his ardent disciple,
letting loose the spark to ignite the water,
drilling a hole at the bottom of my life raft...

All that remains now
is the patient wait
to be engulfed by the raging waters.

Patience...
just a bit more patience...

naseehat = नसीहत = advice
dariyaa = दरिया = water body
suraakh = सुराख = small hole

इश्क नहीं आसाँ

शेख साहब की नसीहत थी
ये आग का दरिया है और डूब के जाना है
लो, हमने भी चिंगारी छोड़ दी है इस पानी में
कर दिए हैं नाव की नींव में सुराख
बस,
अब डूबने का इंतज़ार है
थोड़ा सा इंतज़ार...

bahaanaa

us chaand ko paas khee.nch lo zaraa
aaj andheraa thoDaa ghanaa hai

A Light Embrace

Pull the moon a little closer today;
the darkness is just a little thicker this evening.

bahaanaa = बहाना = excuse

बहाना

उस चाँद को पास खींच लो ज़रा
आज अंधेरा थोड़ा घना है

pardard

ChhoD diyaa hai wahaa.n jhaa.nknaa hamne
us aaine kee maayoosee dekhee nahee.n jaatee ab

The Mirror Crack'd...

No longer do I peep a look at that place;
no longer can I bear to witness the sorrow of that mirror.

pardard = परदर्द = someone else's grief
jhaa.nknaa = झाँकना = peeping or looking by reaching over
maayoosee = मायूसी = sadness; despondency

परदर्द

छोड़ दिया है वहाँ झाँकना हमने
उस आईने की मायूसी देखी नहीं जाती अब

taraanaa

dil kee sitaar
aur unkaa vaadaa tarannum

Strains of Yonder

My heartstrings an eager lyre;
her vague promise a siren's tune…

taraanaa = तराना = melodious tune or song
tarannum = तरन्नुम = a melodious tune

तराना

दिल की सितार
और उनका वादा तरन्नुम

jhallaahaT

abke bahaar aayegee to keh doo.ngaa use
ye saraayghar nahee.n
jab chaahaa, aaye gaye dillagee se
ab rehnaa ho dil me.n to dil se raho
varnaa ChhoD do hamaare gam kee patjhaD ko akele

Of Human Seasons...

Next when Spring comes around,
let her know my stern admonishment:

"This is not the wayfarer's stop,
where you check in and check out as you please.
This time,
stay in my heart, if you so desire,
with all your heart,
or else leave alone
the cold autumn in my heart."

jhallaahaT = झल्लाहट = irritation; consternation
saraayghar = सरायघर = an inn
dillagee = दिल्लगी = flippancy
patjhaD = पतझड़ = the Fall season

झल्लाहट

अबके बहार आएगी तो कह दूँगा उसे
ये सरायघर नहीं
जब चाहा, आए गये दिल्लगी से
अब रहना हो दिल में तो दिल से रहो
वरना छोड़ दो हमारे ग़म की पतझड़ को अकेले

jaane anjaane

koi kehtaa nahee.n kisee kee yaad hai kisee ko
sab apne hee bhoole me.n rehne ke hai.n paaband

Self-Engrossed

No one finds anyone else's memory here,
for each is lost in his own consuming narcissism.

paaband = पाबंद = bound (by routine, for e.g.)

जाने अंजाने

कोई कहता नहीं किसी की याद है किसी को
सब अपने ही भूले में रहने के हैं पाबंद

dotarfaa

in nigaaho.n me.n unDel de khaalis ummeed
aur un nigaaho.n me.n bepanaah pyaar

What's Your Poison?

Pour copiously in my eyes these unbridled hopes.
Pour in her alluring eyes my endless love.

dotarfaa = दोतरफा = bilateral; two-directional
bepanaah = बेपनाह = without constraints; unlimited
khaalis = खालिस = unadulterated

दोतरफ़ा

इन निगाहों में उंड़ेल दे खालिस उम्मीद
और उन निगाहों में बेपनाह प्यार

ibaadat

kyo.nkar koi peeye kuChh aur koi unke saamne
hogee jo tohmat khumaar kee unke

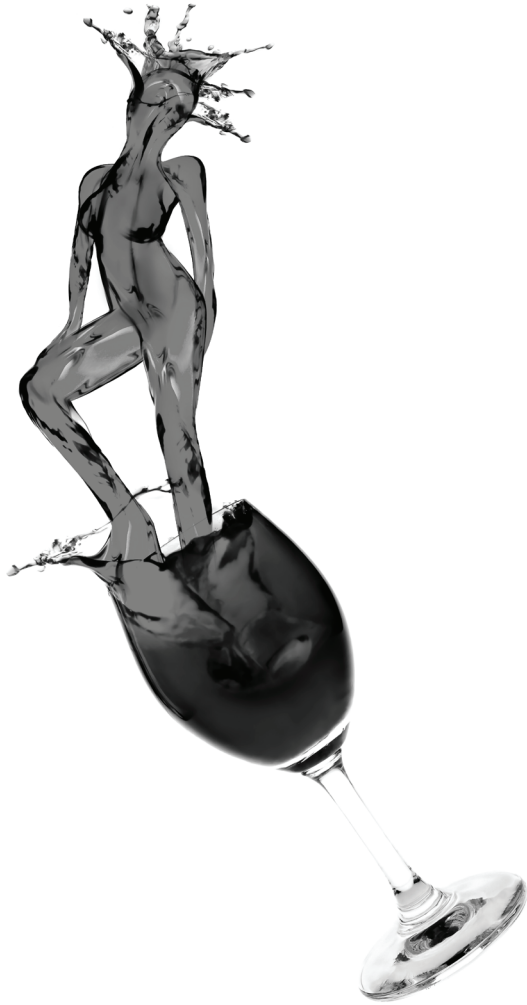
Drunken Looks...

Imbibe not another wine in her presence,
besmirching her swirling intoxication…

ibaadat = इबादत = worship
tohmat = तोहमत = a charge or accusation
khumaar = खुमार = swirling intoxication

इबादत

क्योंकर पीये कुछ और कोई उनके सामने
होगी जो तोहमत खुमार की उनके



ummeedwaar

nadee sookhee hai
fir bhee lagaa rakhee hai kashtee usme.n
baadal kabhee ghir bhee sakte hai.n
achaanak barasne ke liye

Optimism

The river flows no more,
but still, on its dry bed,
I've kept my canoe on the ready...
One never knows when the clouds may decide
to gather in force and bring fortune's tide...

ummeedwaar = उम्मीदवार = candidate

उम्मीदवार

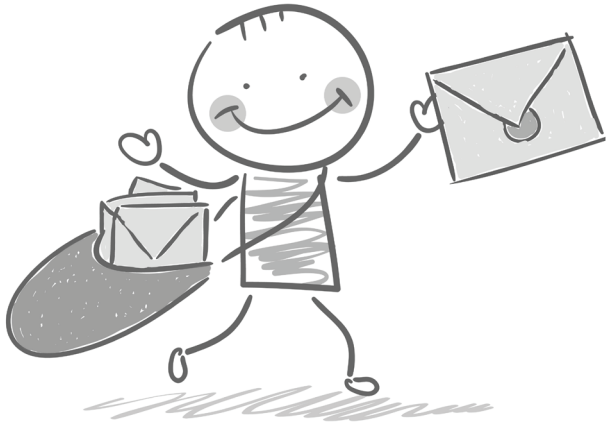
नदी सूखी है
फिर भी लगा रखी है कश्ती उसमें
बादल कभी घिर भी सकते हैं
अचानक बरसने के लिए

it-nee see baat

unkaa aayaa khat naa kam thaa kisee jaam se
kuChh likh dete wo to behusht bhee ho jaate

Perfumed, It Was...

Her perfumed letter was no less rousing
than a chalice of fine wine...
would that she had written some message, to boot,
surely I would have fainted in that heaven of mine!



khat = खत = letter

behusht = बेहुश्त = without a conscious awareness of the surroundings

jaam = जाम = a peg of alcoholic drink

इतनी सी बात

उनका आया खत ना कम था किसी जाम से
कुछ लिख देते वो तो बेहुश्त भी हो जाते

yaade.n

kahee.n garajtee hai.n door ghaTaaye.n
shaayad rone ko hai.n kiseeke intazaar me.n

Distant Sorrows

The clouds are thundering over some distant horizon.
Perhaps they're in waiting
for someone's tears to rain….

garajtee = गरजती = rumbling; roaring
ghaTaaye.n = घटायें = dark clouds, typically of rain

यादें

कहीं गरजती हैं दूर घटायें
शायद रोने को हैं किसीके इंतज़ार में

Appendix - A Primer On Hindi

Devnagari Script & Transliteration

Reading Hindi Script & *Hindi-In-English*

Devnagari - The Script

Devnagari - literally meaning *"belonging to the city of the Gods"* - is the name of the alphabet and script behind dozens of Indian languages, including Hindi and Marathi. It has 42 commonly used letters (and 3-5 other letters which are now nearly defunct). There are some variations in the alphabet to accommodate nuances of various languages.

The letters in the alphabet are characterized by a header line from which the letters hang down. Each letter has a sound associated with it.

The sound of a given letter can be modified by a few types of modifiers (called *"maatraa"*):

- a vertical line, a dot or a semi-colon following the letter;
- placement of one or two slanted lines, a dot, a semi-circle, a dotted semi-circle, a turned semi-circle or a slanted line with a side dot above the header line;
- a slanted line below a letter to clip its sound;
- a dot below a letter to add a slight lisp or softening sound;
- a caret sign below a letter to add the "r" sound (to some letters).

In many cases, where sounds of 2 separate letters are to be merged, the first letter is cropped and merged with the second letter in writing. e.g. "tva" ("त्व") is a combination of "t" ("त") and "va" ("व").

A combination of letters and modifiers produces a very rich set of sounds.

It should be noted that the Devnagari script does not use a full stop to demarcate the end of a sentence but a vertical line, like "।"

Finally, a word on *Shayari*. *Shayari* is a form of verses which predominantly uses the Urdu language. The Urdu script is substantially different from Devnagari (and goes from right to left). However, phonetically, Urdu and Hindi share much commonality, in addition to a reasonable amount of vocabulary. In this book, all Urdu words have been represented in Devnagari, as is accepted practice.

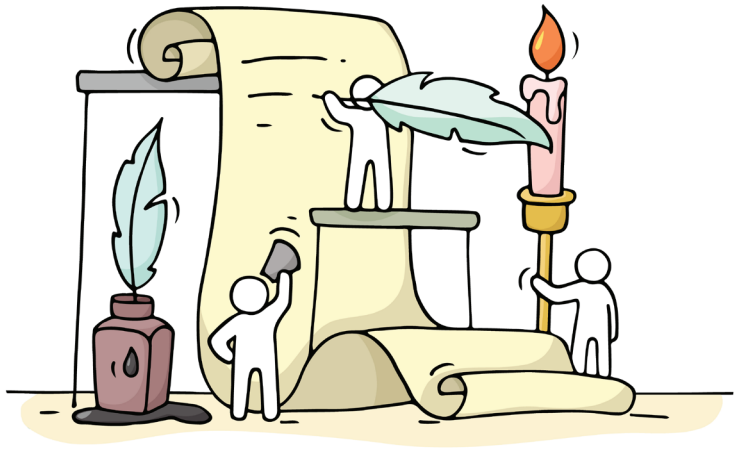
Devnagari Alphabet

English	Devnagari Base Letter	Pronunciation
a	अ	Starting sound in "against"
i	इ	Clipped "ee" sound, as in "lit"
ee	ई	Starting sound in "keep"
u	उ	A clipped "oo" sound
oo	ऊ	The Starting sound in "ooze"
ru	ऋ	Starting sound in "ruminate"
ae	ए	Starting sound in "aim"
ai	ऐ	Starting sound in "air"
k	क	Starting sound in "cut"
kh	ख	Starting sound in "Khalifa", as in "Burj Khalifa"
g	ग	Starting sound in "go"
gh	घ	Combination of 2 sounds: "g" and "h"
ch	च	Starting sound in "chatter"
Chh	छ	Combination of 2 sounds: "ch" and "h"
j	ज	Starting sound in "jug"
jh, z	झ	Last sound in "maze"
T	ट	Starting sound in "try"
Th	ठ	Combination of 2 sounds: "T" and "h"
D	ड	Starting sound in "dog"
Dh	ढ	Combination of 2 sounds: "D" and "h"
t	त	The starting sound in "Talmud" or the French "tu"
th	थ	Starting sound in "three" or "thunder"
d	द	Same as the British pronunciation of English word, "the"
dh	ध	Combination of 2 sounds: "d" and "h"
n	न	Starting sound in "no"
p	प	Starting sound in "punch"
f	फ	Starting sound in "first"
b	ब	Starting sound in "burn"

bh	भ	Combination of 2 sounds: "b" and "h"
m	म	Starting sound in "mother"
y	य	Starting sound in "yearn"
r	र	Starting sound in "run"
l	ल	Starting sound in "loud"
v	व	Starting sound in "viral"
sh	श	Starting sound in "shut"
Sh	ष	Starting sound in "shut"
s	स	Starting sound in "sound"
h	ह	Starting sound in "hunger"
N	ण	This has no English equivalent or combination. It is a strong "n". Make the "n" sound with the tip of the tongue touching the palate (the roof of the mouth) That is "N"
dnya	ज्ञ	Combination of 2 sounds: "g" and "y". In some languages like Marathi, it is a combination 3 sounds: "d", "n" and "ya"
tra	त्र	Combination of 3 sounds: "t", "r" and "a"

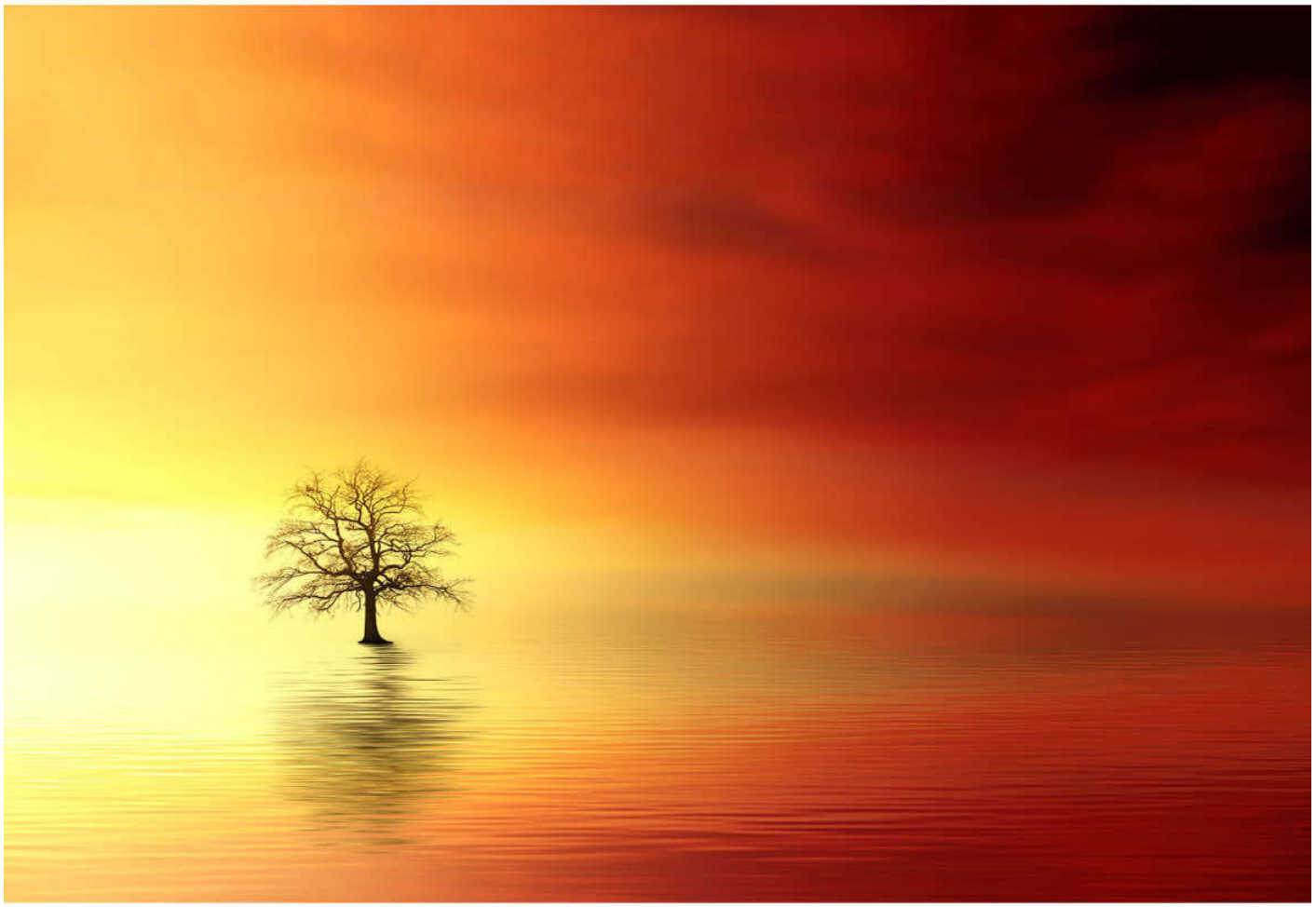
Modifications of base letters by "maatraa": showing an example using " र "

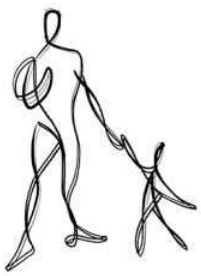
Combination	Modified	Devnagari Letter
r	र	
ra	रा	
ri	रि	
ree	री	
ru	ऋ	Can also be used as "kru"
roo	रू	
re	रे	
rai	रै	
ro	रो	
rau	रौ	Combination of 2 sounds: "r" and "au"
raw	रॉ	
rr	र्र	
ram	रं	Pronounced "rum"
ram	रँ	Pronounced "rum"
r-haa	रः	
ku	कु	Showing lower maatraa with "क" as they don't appear in this bottom location for "र"
koo	कू	



“ प्यासी आँखें पूछ रही थी पैमाने से
कैसे बुझेगी इस मृगजल से तृष्णा? ”

“ My yearning eyes
silently interrogated the goblet:
How will the waters of your mirage
slake my unquenching thirst? ”





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